



## **Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart**

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*Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban  
Development, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations*

### **FY 2019 Budget Hearing- Department of Transportation**

**Secretary Elaine Chao**

**4/12/19**

#### **Opening Statement (as prepared)**

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Today we welcome Secretary Elaine Chao to testify on the Fiscal Year 2019 budget request for the Department of Transportation.

The fiscal year 2019 budget request for the Department of Transportation is \$15.9 billion in discretionary budget authority, and \$75.9 billion in total resources, including obligation limitations for surface transportation and aviation programs.

I would note that this budget request was developed prior to the bipartisan budget Act that lifted sequester for two years and raised the discretionary budget caps.

This bipartisan deal set the stage for us to take immediate action last month to invest in our nation's future, and to rebuild our roads, railways, and airports.

The 2018 THUD bill invests nearly \$11 billion in new transportation and housing infrastructure.

What we just did in the omnibus showed that this committee does real infrastructure.

I would note that we made these investments without adding to the bureaucracy.

I would also note that if you take what we did to invest in infrastructure just this year – on this subcommittee – and extend it over ten years, you get over \$100 billion in infrastructure investments in transportation and housing alone.

This is over half of the \$200 billion proposed by the administration for the infrastructure initiative over ten years. And that figure only counts this subcommittee.

My point is that this committee does real infrastructure. We did it in the omnibus, and I believe we will do it again in fiscal year 2019.

Madam Secretary, I don't think you will see support on this Committee for deep cuts to DOT, especially considering the bill we just passed, and given the two year caps deal that was signed by the President.

That is not to say we shouldn't make smart reductions to ineffective programs. But there is a consensus on this committee that it's time to invest in our nation, and to invest wisely.

There is no doubt that we need to improve our roads, bridges, and railways to bring them to a state of good repair.

We must also continue making progress to modernize our air traffic control system, which is the most advanced, complex, and safest system in the world.

The Administration has proposed general outlines for a larger infrastructure initiative. But we have not yet seen a specific legislative proposal for this initiative.

I agree that we should have a discussion on how to innovate, incentivize, and streamline. But right now we can move forward with authorized programs, particularly building on the bipartisan FAST Act.

We just did that in the omnibus, and we will focus on authorized programs once again as we get to work on fiscal year 2019. The next fiscal year is less than six months away. We are ready to move.

Secretary Chao, I always enjoy our frank and open conversations, and I appreciate your appearance before us today to discuss how we can invest in America – and get our country moving again.

Before we move on, I want to take a moment to once again express my deepest sympathies to the families and loved ones of those who lost their lives in the awful bridge collapse at Florida International University last month. It goes without saying that we must do everything we can to prevent anything like this from ever happening again. I'm sure we will learn a lot more about what happened once the National Transportation Safety Board completes its investigation.

I thank you and your staff for providing as much information as was possible in the immediate aftermath of the accident, and I look forward to your continued cooperation.

And now I would like to yield to my friend and Ranking Member, Mr. Price.

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